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Suggestions are made for evaluation and more effective use of the facilities of the local school in providing better than average students with challenging educational opportunities. Giftedness includes the student who is superior in intellect or talent or skillfulness or in leadership ability. Each of these types has certain observable characteristics. The students can be identified through observation for these characteristics. These are revealed through various subjective and objective ways such as: school and test achievement, age-grade status, interviews, ratings, aptitude tests, work samples and sociometry. All these methods should be verified using a complete psychological evaluation.

By applying sound principles of education in a sincere effort to meet current needs for all children, new and better methods will be learned. In providing for the educational needs of the gifted, three areas or concentration have been found helpful when properly coordinated: 1) curriculum improvement, 2) guidance services, and 3) parent counseling.

The need must be assessed in order to begin. This should be done by a special study committee on the local level. The committee is also responsible for building public support. Study kits of materials for gifted children are on loan from the North Dakota Board of Education. Consultants are also available.

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Guides To Special Education

In North Dakota—

ED001225

IX. The Gifted Child

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
M. F. Peterson, Superintendent
BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA

"BUY DAKOTA MAID FLOUR"

GUIDES TO SPECIAL EDUCATION IN NORTH DAKOTA

IX. THE GIFTED CHILD

Prepared and Distributed by the
Division of Special Education
Janet M. Smaltz, Director
and the Division of Guidance Services
James D. Mathisen, Director

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
M. F. Peterson, Superintendent
Bismarck, North Dakota
1961

"Buy North Dakota Products"

Repeated inquiries have come to the Department of Public Instruction asking what is being done or can be done for gifted children in North Dakota schools. Suggestions are made in this booklet for evaluation and more effective use of the facilities of the local school in providing children with better than average ability with educational opportunities which will challenge them.

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WHO ARE THE GIFTED CHILDREN

There are a score of different words used to convey the concept of superior ability. Some of these are: exceptional, talented, genius, bright, accelerated, rapid learner, superior, gifted, advanced. Likewise, there is some confusion as to the statistical definition of superior ability. Some writers identify the gifted as the upper 1% of the school population while others include the upper 15 to 20%.

Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of clarity the basic frame of reference in this booklet will be as follows:

The Gifted Pupils - an all-inclusive term referring to the upper 15% of the school population. The intellectually superior, talented, skillful, and able leader.

The Intellectually Superior - those endowed with highly superior mental ability who score an I.Q. of 135 or above on an individual intelligence test administered by a qualified psychologist.

The Talented - those children who have special scientific, musical, artistic, dramatic, dancing, or writing ability.

The Skillful - those with special ability in physical or mechanical skill.

Leadership Ability - those who show particular ability in social skills and ability to work with and to lead others.

Indications of Giftedness

As indicated above, a gifted child may possess a high level of general intelligence as measured by tests or he may have special abilities which are not necessarily associated with a high intelligence quotient. Giftedness may be found in any group and manifest itself in many forms during the life of an individual.

Some of the identifying characteristics of giftedness are listed below. For convenience, they are grouped by type of giftedness as defined earlier.

The Intellectually Superior

1. Learns rapidly and without much effort
2. Uses a lot of common sense and practical knowledge
3. Reasons things out well
4. Thinks clearly, comprehends meanings, recognizes relationships
5. Retains what he has heard or read without much rote drill
6. Uses a large number of words easily and accurately
7. Can read books that are one or two years in advance of therest of the class
8. Performs difficult mental tasks
9. Asks many questions. Is interested in many subjects
10. Does some academic work one or two years in advance of his class
11. Is original in methods or ideas
12. Is alert, keenly observant, responds quickly

The Talented

1. Wants to know causes and reasons
2. Can do arithmetic or mathematics one or two years ahead of his class
3. Has good gross and minute motor coordination
4. Reads a considerable amount of scientific literature and enjoys scientific discussions.

The Talanted (Continued)

5. Is not easily discouraged by failure of experiments and projects and spends a great deal of time on projects of his own.
6. Enjoys music more than others in the group.
7. Uses music to express his feelings and experiences.
8. Makes up original tunes
9. Plays one or more musical instruments well and/or sings well.
10. Shows ability to draw a variety of things and originality in art work.
11. Uses prospective ink drawing
12. Uses art to express his feelings and experiences.
13. Can assume characterizations easily.
14. Writes original plays or makes up plays from stories; shows interest in dramatic activities.
15. Enjoys evoking emotional responses from listeners and shows unusual ability to dramatize feelings and experiences.
16. Enjoys writing prose or poetry.
17. Can develop a story well.
18. Makes the characters seem lifelike in his writing and chooses discriptive words that show perception.

The Skillful

1. Is interested in mechanical gadgets and machines and can repair gadgets and put together mechanical devices.
2. Has hobbies involving mechanical devices.
3. Comprehends mechanical problems, puzzles and trick questions and reads widely on mechanical subjects.
4. Is consistently outstanding and enjoys many kinds of competitive games.
5. Is well coordinated in physical skills.
6. Is energetic and seems to need considerable exercise to stay happy.
7. Is willing to spend much time practicing physical activities.

Leadership Ability

1. Is looked up to by others and sought out for opinions and ideas
2. Can take charge of a group
3. Judges abilities of other children accurately and places them well in group activities.
4. Guides others effectively toward goals
5. Is enthusiastic
6. Is liked and respected by others in the group.
7. Is a leader in several kinds of activities
8. Is elected to offices.

Methods for Identification of the Gifted

As can be seen by the above characteristics, the factors involved in the identification of the gifted are physical, intellectual, emotional, and social. None of these should be considered in isolation. The superior child has all the fundsmental needs of childhood: comfort, affection, exercise, play, security, self-respect, and the right to mature unhampered by fears, pressures, or exploitation.

Teachers and other interested persons may use both subjective and objective means for identifying the gifted.

Subjective Methods

1. Observation
2. School marks
3. Age grade status
4. Interest inventories
5. Interviews
6. Rating scales
7. Autobiography
8. Sociometry

Objective Methods

1. Work samples
2. Group readiness tests
3. Group mental ability tests
4. Achievement tests
5. Aptitude tests

Methods for Identification of the Gifted (continued)

The Talent Kit described later includes references which describe these techniques in detail. However, these methods are subject to error and the data gathered by these means should be verified using a complete psychological evaluation.

Incidence of Giftedness in North Dakota

If national statistics are applied to North Dakota schools, the estimated totals for the state would be:

The Gifted.	19,600
The Intellectually Superior . . .	1,240
The Talented, the Skillful, the Leaders	18,360

Such figures are only estimates and as such are limited in their usefulness. However, we can assume that there are gifted children in every school who need special assistance.

PLANNING FOR THE EDUCATION OF GIFTED CHILDREN

General Considerations

"There is nothing so unequal as the equal treatment of unequals." Marion Scheifele

No thinking person would minimize the potential value of that segment of the school population which has better-than-average ability or talent. From this group come the scientists, the writers, the teachers, and leaders of their generation. There has been sincere reluctance on the part of some educators, however, when urged to provide special educational services for the gifted.

A few have felt that in some way they might undermine the basic democratic principle upon which our educational system is built by fostering an "intellegensia." Others have been reluctant to embrace the practice of special programming for the gifted because they feel that "the gifted can take care of themselves" or "we don't know enough about such a program yet."

We must face squarely the obligation we have to <u>all</u> children to provide each with the opportunity to develop the abilities which he has. If we are not doing this for the gifted in the regular school program - and it seems that we are not - then special programming is needed. From the studies which have been made recently, we know that the gifted do not take care of themselves. A report of the National

Manpower Council is sited by Passow (1) as follows:

"The discrepancy between early manifestations of talent and adult choice of activity and achievement results in an estimated loss of society of at least half the people who have the capacity for making an outstanding contribution."[1]

Even though more of our high school graduates are going to college, attendance at college is often determined by financial ability rather than by student aptitude, and many competent high school graduates do not go on to higher education.

"Studies have shown in many states that only half of the gifted youth who are graduated from secondary schools go on to college.....The large number of able high school graduates who receive no college education provides persuasive evidence of the fact that the nation's intelligence resources are not fully used.[2]

To the reluctance of those who feel we do not know enough about educating this group of gifted pupils in the best possible way, we must add that we do not know

1: Passow et.al. "Planning for Talented Youth" Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, p. 26.

2: Educational Policies Commission, Education of the Gifted, NEA, Washington, D.C., p. 20.

all about anything and that one of the best ways to learn is to do something. By applying sound principles of education in a sincere effort to meet current needs we should help ourselves and others to learn better methods. Research in this area is continuing and increasing.

Educational practices often follow a rags-to-riches sequence in our schools. An obscure method or philosophy may become a fad overnight. Everyone scuttles past methods in an all-out trial of the new fad. A popular warcry seems to take over the educational field. Sometimes it has been necessary to "over-sell" an area of unmet need. Such overemphasis often follows an honest attempt to champion the problem of a neglected group. It is hoped that we can avoid such an extreme in the planning of educational opportunities for the gifted child. John H. Fischer, Superintendent, Baltimore Public Schools has expressed our need for continued consideration of all children in the following paragraphs:

GIFTS COME IN ALL SIZES

"The phenomenon of the pendulum, which is present in most human affairs, often affects educational practice....But many of us would prefer a more reasonable way to apply new information or to tackle new problems. Dashing pell-mell from one side to the other seems a fairly wasteful way of running any sort of business."

"A case in point is the education of gifted children. Some schools which formerly spent little time in identifying such children or giving them special attention are now in danger of concentrating so heavily upon this group that the average and the handicapped may be neglected. We have a propensity for swinging the spotlight of publicity so that it becomes a sort of irrestible guide for the program pendulum."

"Our obligation to educate well the child who is intellectually outstanding is clear and inescapable. But we subscribe to a system of value which recognizes the worth and dignity of every person whatever the variation in his physical or mental characteristics. Expressed in terms of classroom practice this requires painstaking effort to identify not only the great gifts of the genius, but as well the modest endowment which is so much more common."

"The swing of the publicity spotlight may help temporarily to restore a missing emphasis, but a system of floodlights for the whole school would be better. Indeed some of the best results are achieved with a small flashlight in the hands of a teacher who knows where to look for little gifts."

<u>Baltimore Schools Newsletter</u>

Some Specific Areas of Concentration

In providing for the educational need of the gifted, three areas of concentration have been found helpful when properly coordinated. These areas are: (1) curriculum improvement, (2) guidance services, (3) and parent counseling.

The most widely acclaimed plan for gifted pupils is the enriched curriculum. Basic to this plan is a sufficient variety of books and reference materials in which gifted pupils can do independent reading and research. Necessary, too, is the provision for a sufficient variety of activities which not only will challenge the pupils but will provide social interaction where bright, average, and slow-learning children can learn to play and plan together. The gifted child needs to learn to accept responsibility, to respect the potential talents of other pupils, and to tolerate the academic shortcomings of his slow learning associates. The capacity of the gifted can usually be challenged in literature dealing with science whether it be home economics or flying an airplane.

This enrichment of the curriculum may take the form of:

1. Modifying the program of studies to include more challenging subjects and more opportunity for creative work.

Some Specific Areas of Concentration (Con't)

2. Helping pupils to work on class projects that make a contribution to class, school and community.

3. Encouraging independent work in science, art, music, or writing.

4. Committee work.

5. Community study.

Plans should be made to identify the gifted child early so that a long term program or education may be organized. Guidance services are necessary if the gifted pupil is to become a well adjusted, happy, and successful personality. Developmental guidance of the gifted child follows the general pattern of effective guidance for all children. More specifically it requires.

1. Special study of the child to recognize and understand abilities and talents.

2. Helping the child to progress in academic achievement with satisfaction.

3. Assisting the child to develop a concept of his most acceptable self and his responsibility to society for gifts.

4. Assisting the child to obtain emotional maturity.

Parent participation in the planning for the gifted is vital to the success of an effective program. Parents of such children are frequently resourceful in developing the aptitudes and interests of their children. Through conferences the parents may gain insight into

Parent participation (Continued)

their responsibilities for helping their gifted child toward social, emotional, and intellectual development. The following suggestions have been found useful in counseling the parents of gifted children:

1. Ask parents to come in for an interview in which they may talk out satisfactions and problems. The crystalization of their thinking may give them a better prospective in viewing the child and working with the school.

2. Urge fathers who are professional workers to spend more time with their gifted sons.

3. Explain to parents of pre-adolescent gifted children that they should have greater understanding of the problems of these children who often express adolescent behavior at an earlier age than do normal children.

4. Impress parents from lower social or economic classes who have bright or potentially gifted children with their responsibility for providing as stimulating a home environment as possible.

5. Suggest that parents from the professional classes do not take the success of their children for granted and set standards so high that the gap between their aspirational levels and their achievement levels results only in feelings of frustration.

6. Indicate to mothers of pre-teen gifted sons that greater acceptance and tolerance of their behavior may be necessary than for the behavior of their daughters of similar age.

Parent participation (Continued)

7. Make clear to parents the importance of family cohesiveness where mutual respect and appreciation of each member are stressed, particularly where the I.Q. of the gifted child is higher than that of the parents or of siblings. Parents and siblings may create feelings of rejection and insecurity if they indicate to the gifted child that he is different and thus set apart from the family circle.

8. Assist parents to become active in working with other gifted children by making their hobbies, collections or professional know-how available to children at meetings, demonstrations or field trips.

GETTING READY TO HELP THE GIFTED IN NORTH DAKOTA

Assessing the need

So far we have explored some of the basic factors involved in the education and guidance of the gifted in an attempt to point toward a sound though perhaps undramatic means of developing a program for gifted children which may be practical for the local schools of North Dakota. In North Dakota we do not have educational facilities, time or money to waste on pendulum swinging. We have the opportunity also, since our special education program is relatively young, to benefit from the experiences of other states where programs for the gifted have been in operation a number of years. Whatever is sound and practical for any of our children, we should make a sincere attempt to provide for them.

First of all, we must face the fact that inferior teaching and inadequate school curricula do not provide incentive for the gifted any more than they do for the other children in the school. Adequate libraries, worthy laboratories and challenging teachers should be a part of every school where children are taught. Better schools for all will help fulfill our first obligation to the gifted.

Getting Ready to Help the Gifted in North Dakota (Con't)

What about segregated education for the approximately 19,000 gifted children in North Dakota? Whether or not we subscribe to this idea several factors rule out this approach as an immediate or even as an eventual arrangement in our schools. There are several successful programs in large metropolitan areas using segregated classes. The Major Work Classes in Cleveland, Ohio, are examples of this type of program. In North Dakota many individual schools will have several intellectually superior or otherwise gifted children, but not enough for special classes for the gifted alone. The disadvantages of foster-homes or dormitory care, travel distances, etc. will not make special classes in isolated communities practical or popular.

The Study Committee

It becomes necessary then, to look to the facilities of the local school and to assess its strength and weaknesses and to see what resources can be developed for the extension of opportunity to the gifted students, keeping in mind the welfare of every student enrolled.

This can best be done by a local school committee. A group of three or four interested faculty members should discuss the need and then set

The Study Committee (Continued)

out to interest a representative group from the elementary and secondary school faculties to make a continuing study of the needs and opportunities for the gifted in the local school. It is important that classroom teachers participate since most of the changes in curriculum, scheduling, extra curricular activities, guidance, and other adaptations resulting from such a study will be carried on by the regular teacher.

An outline of the organizational pattern of a typical Study Committee follows:

THE STUDY COMMITTEE

A. Name

The Committee for the Study of the Needs and Opportunities for the Gifted in the local school.

B. Membership

Volunteer representative teachers from elementary grades, junior high and senior high schools, guidance, and special education.

C. Meetings

Two hours twice each month is suggested. Time should be arranged to satisfaction of the committee, but it should be sufficient time to allow worthwile results.

D. Form

Discussion and Reports, Committee Studies Evaluation of Resources, etc.

The Study Committee (Continued)

(Materials for study will be available in loan in The Talent Kit from the Department of Public Instruction, free of charge. See page 20)

E. Areas of Exploration

1. Who are the gifted children? Criteria for selection.

2. What types of programs for the gifted are operating in public schools today?

3. What are some of the attitudes toward the gifted to foster? To challenge?

4. What can we do in our school to encourage

(a) better subjective evaluation of pupils by teachers
(b) more meaningful reporting of achievement
(c) better use of cumulative reports
(d) a better standardized testing program

5. What are the resources for gifted children in our school now? Curricular and extra-curricular

6. What can we do in elementary classes to help gifted children?

7. What opportunities are being given to children for self-study?

8. How can we use more varied lesson assignments within elementary grades?

9. Can present personnel handle more creative and special interest extra-curricular activities for elementary pupils?

10. Do we need additional personnel?

11. What social leadership opportunities are being provided to elementary pupils?

12. How can field trips or study of foreign language aid the gifted.

The Study Committee (Continued)

13. What different teaching techniques are involved in challenging the gifted pupils?

14. What can we do for gifted students at the high school level?

15. Can present personnel be used more effectively by rescheduling?

16. What is a sound counseling service and how can it be organized?

17. Do we need additional personnel?

18. Do we have the necessary time, space and personnel to help the gifted?

19. What curriculum changes can be made?

20. Can we add or drop some extra-curricular activities to help the total school program?

21. How can we interpret this program to the community?

22. How can we encourage better parent participation?

F. Public Relations

Early in the work of the committee when attitudes toward the gifted are discussed, the group should explore the advisability of inviting laymen to meet with the committee following the initial evaluation and study. Such members should be included only if selected to contribute and not to hamper discussion. Whether or not laymen are included on the committee, interpretation of the program to the community will beimportant. It should be neither over-emphasized nor "smuggled" in. It should be presented objectively as a part of the regular school program. The parents and others in the community have a right to know that:

The Study Committee (Continued)

1. Children in a program for the gifted are not being "pushed" or exploited.

2. It is as natural for parents to take normal pride in their child's intellectual achievements as in athletic ability.

3. The purpose of education is to help each child achieve at the level of his ability whether he is retarded, average or gifted.

The Talent Kit

Six kits of study materials each containing the books and pamphlets listed below are available on free loan from the Department of Public Instruction, Bismarck. Requests will be filled in order of their receipt, and the materials can be checked out for a period of two months by any one school system.

IDENTIFYING CHILDREN WHO NEED HELP AND HELPING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, Kough and DeHaan. Vol 1-2, Elementary Edition, Science Research Associates, 57 West Grand Avenue, Chicago 10, Illinois, 1955.

IDENTIFYING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AND HELPING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, Kough and DeHaan. Vol. 1-2, Secondary Edition, Science Research Associates, 57 West Grand Avenue, Chicago 10, Illinois. 1955.

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Dr. Anne Carlson, Superintendent, Crippled Children's School, Jamestown

Dr. Wm. Bublitz, 1027 10th Street Northwest, Minot

Miss Janet M. Smaltz, Director of Special Education, Department of Public Instruction, Bismarck

The persons listed above will be available as their activities permit for consultation or discussion meetings. It is suggested that the services of these resource persons be requested at least two weeks in advance of your meeting.

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